judges at the present time upon the language of their predecessors is such as to attain the result which Sir James Fitzjames Stephen indicated, and, virtually, "to dispose satisfactorily of all cases whatever."

Having reached this point, it may be useful to ask ourselves these questions:—

I. Is it the fact that all cases are, at the present time, satisfactorily disposed of?

II. If it is not the fact, would not our right course be to draw up a list of recent cases which are considered to have not been satisfactorily disposed of, and then to endeavour to ascertain whether, in each case, such failure has been due, (*a*) to the terms of the answers given by the judges in 1843, or (*b*) to some other cause?

III. Another question that might perhaps arise is, whether a case can be said to have been "satisfactorily" disposed of if such case has been decided in a manner which would appear not to be in absolutely strict conformity with what, by some commentators, has been regarded as the precise meaning of the terms employed by the judges in the year 1843?

But, with respect to this point, it may perhaps be permissible to suggest that the answers given by the judges, in 1843, were given by them for the use of other succeeding judges; and that, if the present distinguished occupants of the bench are able to perceive the possibility of placing upon the terms of those answers an interpretation capable of disposing satisfactorily of every case, it would hardly appear to be for us to attempt to call in question their right so to do.

MURDER BY A PATIENT IN THE DUNDEE ASYLUM.

The Dundee Royal Asylum was recently the scene of a murder by a patient named Redmond, who while at work in the grounds suddenly attacked an attendant with a spade, inflicting serious injuries, and killing outright a fellow patient who came to the rescue. A brother of this patient is reported to have committed homicide. This would appear to be one of those regrettable incidents which constitute the penalty for the innumerable advantages resulting from the modern system of employment of the insane; calling not only for sympathy with the sufferers, but also with the physicians under whose supervision they happen.

PRINCELY HEREDITARY MENTAL DEGENERACY AND MONOMANIA.

Prince Charles de Loos Corswarem was tried before the Correctional Tribunal of Brussels, in February, on charges of swindling and forgery extending over several years. He had obtained "millions of francs" from usurers and others raised on the dowries of ladies whom he was about to marry. He was acquitted, firstly, because he was irresponsible, and secondly, because the charges were not proven. This form of insanity would appear to be associated with a large amount of method.

THE INSANITY LAW.

The Legislature of New York State is proceeding to codify the laws relating to insanity, and the *Medical Record* (7th March, 1896), while justly urging the increase of the Lunacy Commission to eleven members, denounces the provision which is proposed that the medical member "shall have had five years' actual experience in the care and treatment of the insane, and is, or has been a Superintendent or first Assistant Physician of a State Hospital."

The *Record* goes on to recommend that the appointment should be filled by a practitioner experienced in the field of neurology, since "no one trained in asylum methods could detect the errors in the treatment of the insane in these institutions." In other words the view of the *Record* seems to be that the less a man knows about insanity the better qualified he is to act as a Medical Commissioner. In this view, the writer of the *Record* article should be an eligible candidate, but perhaps he is not a neurologist.

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.42.178.683-b Published online by Cambridge University Press